





What this country needs is more men with sufficient nerve to discard false precedent and establish that which is right. Tom Reed of Maine is that kind of man.

ITALY has been building a new school-house which cost nearly \$20,000. Fresno has two such and will have to build another and larger one during the coming summer.

FRESNO has no nine in the baseball league this season. Our twilight contemporary made the fight of its life to secure the admission of a Fresno club, and, as usual, lost.

Ton Moore's "Vale of Arona" has fallen into the hands of an English syndicate and the woods will be swept away in the manufacture of matches. Nothing is too beautiful or sacred for the maw of an English syndicate. Our American breweries are all going that way.

MANY thousands of acres of new land are being needed to grain west of the Southern Pacific railroad in this county. The west side branch road will be needed about harvest time if the weather continues favorable for grain crops on dry land.

YOUNG men who are employed in Fresno should look to the future. Instead of buying Louisiana lottery tickets, or playing off their week's wages on Sunday at poker, they ought to be investing most of their spare change in "futures" founded upon a more substantial basis.

PLOWING and seeding land by steam, heading and threshing grain and hauling it to market by the same means, promises to so reduce the cost of raising wheat and barley in this state as to practically drive small farmers out of the grain producing business. Better be getting an orchard or vineyard started.

BURNING buildings has been reduced to a science by the railroad people, and it is wonderful how little time is consumed in replacing any kind of a bridge that may be rendered unserviceable or entirely destroyed. This is one branch of the business in which the Southern Pacific is abreast of its most energetic rivals.

IMPROVEMENT seems to be the general order of the day in Fresno. Streets are being graded, others paved, sidewalks are being laid and doorways beautified with shrubbery, flowers and patches of lawn. Too much such work cannot be done, and those who have not already made a beginning should not delay doing so.

FRESNO will have her first legal hanging at no distant day, the death sentence having been pronounced upon the Chinaman, Ah Gue Young, convicted of the murder of a county woman on the 27th day of last November. "The date of execution has been fixed, and will probably be set for some time in March.

PERSONS who write on both sides of the sheet must not expect to see their communications published in THE REPUBLICAN. The reporters have other use for their time than to waste it by making copies of communications thus written. Write on only one side of the sheet. That is the universal newspaper rule.

Our twilight contemporary makes a great deal of noise and raises a cloud of dust to escape the inquiring eyes of people interested in the irrigation district. The dodge is too thin, however, for the people are on their object in fighting the Supervisors' battle. Come out from under cover and tell the people whether you favor the district or oppose it.

THE San Francisco Alta says: "We regret to see that a brother editor, in Texas, Mr. Meton, has been put in jail in Texas for getting drunk. Texas, counting upon her great size and cotton crop and big Democratic majority, should pause in her mad career, before tramping further upon the liberties of the press."

In selecting orange trees for planting in Fresno county care should be exercised to get only such trees as are budded on orange roots. A few years ago there was a great craze for orange trees grafted on lemon roots, but experience has shown this idea to be an enormous one. Orange growers in Fresno county should profit as largely as possible by the experience of others.

In the discussion of all matters pertaining to the proposed irrigation district we trust that correspondents will have the frankness to sign their names. Our columns are open to all who desire to express honest opinions and address arguments in support of the same. This district business is a serious matter, and one upon which the fullest light should be shed.

There can be no fault urged against churches nor church-going people so long as no attempt is made to exercise a church influence in political matters. The first step in this direction is nearly always aimed at public schools, Sunday newspapers or municipal government. Church and state are separate and distinct and can never be otherwise so long as this republic of ours shall endure.

THE \$1500 which the Board of Supervisors have voted to Dr. Leach for the present year, in excess of what other physicians have offered their services for, would, if applied to that purpose, build about 1500 feet of bituminous pavement ten feet in width in the court yard. But the people must continue to wade in mud and water when it rains and in the dust when it is dry weather—for the boss has fixed it that way.

FRANCISCO or no precedent, the ruling of Speaker Reed that a minority cannot block legislation by refusing to take part in the proceedings of the House when they are present, is founded on justice and common sense, and will receive the hearty endorsement of the thinking masses of American people, for the simple reason that American citizens believe in right and justice and care nothing for precedent which is not founded on three immortal principles.

THE PROPOSED DISTRICT.

There is a great deal of talk relative to the formation of a vast irrigation district to include all the irrigable land between the San Joaquin and Kings rivers in this county. Such an enterprise is in keeping with the energy and progressive ideas of Fresno people, and it is only a matter of time to see that the organization of such a district has been delayed so long. Fresno has the most extensive system of irrigating canals and ditches to be found in any section of equal area in the United States, and this system is the result of individual energy combined with private capital. This system of ditches has been constructed at an enormous outlay of money and labor, and the owners of these ditches have acquired wealth through the sale of water rights to the people whose lands are irrigated. Some are content with the present condition, preferring to pay the heavy annual tax or assessments exacted by the canal companies rather than risk losing what they now have in an attempt to better their circumstances. Their fears are, we believe, entirely without foundation. There are many good reasons why the district system is preferable to one controlled by individuals who are in the business simply to make money, and we have yet to hear one good, reasonable argument against the district.

In the first place, the object in forming a district is to take the water supply out of the hands of speculators. This in itself is a sufficient excuse for the formation of the proposed Fresno district, and is also one of the strongest arguments in favor of it. Another matter of the greatest importance is that confining ditch, riparian and other interests existing or claimed in the ownership of the water are consolidated and vested in the district. From this there is no appeal. Under the provisions of the Wright law the district can condemn any and all existing ditches, works and rights of individuals and appropriate them to public use, thus insuring an equitable distribution of the water at the lowest possible expense. Of course, ditches and water rights appropriated by the district will have to be paid for, but not at the price the seller may choose to ask. For instance a ditch company has already sold as much water as its main canal will carry, it cannot turn around and sell that water to the district—it will have nothing to dispose of but its ditches, and ditches are not worth very much now-a-days, so rapidly can they be constructed with the improved machinery employed in such work. Owners of water rights will be reimbursed by the district, and still they will enjoy the same rights to receive and use water for irrigation as at present, the only difference being that like privileges will be extended to each and every land-owner within the district whose land is susceptible of being irrigated.

Now, as to the probable cost of irrigating under the district system, let us do a little careful figuring. The proposed district contains about 630,000 acres of irrigable land, to irrigate which, according to the usual estimate of one cubic foot of water per second for each 100 acres, would require a continual flow of water equivalent to 3750 cubic feet of water per second. Under the control of private ditch companies this amount of water would cost, at \$1000 per cubic foot—the lowest prevailing price—the sum of \$3,750,000, all of which would go into the pockets of individual speculators very few of whom reside in Fresno county. The expense of the irrigation does not end with the purchase of a water right, however. He must bind himself to pay an annual assessment to the ditch company of \$100 on each right to the use of one cubic foot of water. Therefore the cost of 3750 cubic feet of water would entail an annual assessment of \$375,000 under the present system of private ownership of ditches. Under the district system the irrigators will own the canals and the water. An annual tax will be levied for extending the system of ditches and for keeping them in proper repair. This tax will have to be paid upon all unimproved land within the district which may be but is not irrigated. Those who are using the water now will have to bear a portion of the expense of extending the system of ditches, to be sure, but they will also get what money they have paid for water rights returned to them, and this income will more than meet the outlay. The rapid increase in value of wild lands will result in decreasing the annual tax rate unless an attempt is made to extend the canal so rapidly, and when the whole district shall have been brought under the canal system the tax will surely decrease to a mere pittance—perhaps not more than a few cents per acre—for all the outlay necessary will be the keeping up of ditches and supervising the distribution of the water. The mill-stone now weighing irrefragably down in this county is private ownership of canals, and consequent exorbitant tolls for the use of water. The district system provides a remedy for this evil and the people living between the San Joaquin and Kings rivers now have the opportunity to avail themselves of the remedy.

The question has been raised whether or not the city of Fresno should be included as a part of the district. We believe that it should. All that Fresno now is, all that the future may bring forth, is founded upon irrigation. Can we then, as a city, afford to stay out of the district? Given now the city is compelled to spend money ten or fifteen miles outside of her limits to protect herself against overflow and damage by flood waters during the rainy season. If the city was a part of the great irrigation district, the canals of the district would be constructed with a view of protecting the city as well as to supply the lands adjoining with water for irrigation. The city would also obtain an abundance of water for fire cylinders, for street sprinkling, for public parks, etc., while small streams of running water would ornament either side of her streets. The Republicans are strongly impressed with the many advantages to be gained by the city in casting her lot with the district.

Since Constable Johnston has had the courage to go contrary to the wishes of the parties who profit by the earnings of the prostitutes doing business in the Phillips building, on a street, and ordered them to move, we hope that he will also have the courage to enforce the law if they persist in remaining there.

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It will have to be acknowledged that this is a novelty in physics. In the moral aspect the case is no better. The Democrats are contending for the right to make a false and fraudulent record. Our liberties are supposed to be at stake if, whenever the minority is so disposed, the record cannot be made to declare an outright—that is to say, that there is not a quorum present when vitally and in the sight of all men the number of representatives necessary to make a quorum are there. The Clerk is the Betsy Jane who is expected to announce that such and such members are not at home, though the voice giving the command for the misstatement is distinctly audible.

Speaker Reed appears to have knocked this imposture into a cocked hat. The only argument worth considering that has been offered in support of it is that it is hoary with age. But that is, perhaps, the strongest thing that could be said for the overthrow of the fraud. Age cannot make any departure from the truth respectable. The practice did not grow out of any desire to protect the rights of the minority. The minority has no inalienable right to tell lies and have them recorded. The genesis of the custom is discovered in the moral cowardice of individual members. It was found to be convenient for the Representative, who wished to dodge responsibility, not to record him as present when he declined to vote. If he should subsequently be blamed over the course he took for that he was absent, and for that absence a thousand excuses could be alleged.

It was not dreamed when these clumsy performances were tolerated in individual cases that they would grow into a grand system by which the minority could prevent the majority from exercising its undoubted right to rule. In the House of Commons, when the bell rings for division, the member or members who do not wish to vote must leave the House bodily. But even retirement cannot be said to be a right. The House of Commons, as well as the House of Representatives, has the right to bring back the absent member. It is true that neither body can make him vote if he does not want to do so. But the fact of his presence and refusal to vote can be made a matter of record, so that his constituents may subsequently deal with him.

There is not any living principle involved in the fight which the Democrats are making in the House. The alternative to be or not to be in east side by them. They claim to be present or absent at will. Now they are visible—next moment they are supposed to be invisible. Now you see them, now you don't. It is not certain that when the patriot armies went forth to fight the minions of George III that they had any notion, no matter how indistinct, that a wishing cap, to enable the Representative to render himself invisible at will, was one of the things which they wanted and which that frugal and foolish King denied. The Democrats have not made a bit of headway in this absurd and foolish contention. If there is any measure or proposition before the House which they do not approve, their duty is in the negative. It is their business to argue and show that it is wrong. If they are, notwithstanding, voted down, they have done all that can be expected of them. No more can or ought to be demanded.

To claim the right to defeat the majority by a pretended and unreal disappearance is little more than a legislative farce, sure to bring down the actors rather than the House. It is hoped that the Democrats will include the Representative privilege of being declared absent when he is bodily present in their next declaration of principles. It would come in quite harmoniously with the old cry of free trade and sailors' rights. In such a hotch-potch the inalienable right to tell a legislative lie would not be out of place.

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On Wednesday the Democratic members of the Montana Senate were routed, and lost. There has been a deadlock for several weeks, neither having a quorum, and the Democrats refusing to organize because the Lieutenant-Governor was a Republican and would therefore have the deciding vote in all matters affecting party organizations. The deadlock was broken in this manner: After a temporary organization had been effected a motion was made that the Senate proceed to consider bills from the Republican House (there being two Houses organized, one by the Democrats and the other by Republicans). Two Democrats demanded the ayes and noes, for the purpose of showing that there was no quorum in the Senate. Seven Republicans voted aye, which lacked one of being a quorum, and all of the Democrats refrained from voting. The presiding officer announced that inasmuch as two Democratic members were present, according to the official minutes, and were on record as having demanded the ayes and noes upon the question, that he would rule that they were present, that there was a quorum present, and that the question was carried. He then announced that the Senate was in session and the first business was the consideration of bills passed by the House. To say that the Democrats were astonished, does not express their condition—they were utterly demoralized.

When the completion of the Theater Barton, Fresno, will be provided with a play house second only in comfort, size and appointments to the California Theater of San Francisco, which is acknowledged now to be by all odds the most extravagantly furnished amusement hall on the Pacific Coast. The theater which Mr. Barton is now having built in this city would be a credit to St. Louis, Cincinnati, New Orleans, or even Chicago. It is like everything undertaken in Fresno—a little ahead of the times today—but will not remain long. We are continually advancing.

If the county General Fund was overdrawn to the extent of \$19,800 and the Indigent Sick Fund to the amount of \$2300 during the first six months of the present fiscal year, can any one advance a logical argument against curtailing expenditures? The Republicans demand retrenchment in every branch of public business. Good work at good prices is not contrary to the principles of true economy, but ordinary services at exorbitant prices, without any tangible excuse, is favoritism that attacks strongly of corruption.

This insinuation has been flung at us that THE REPUBLICAN is waging war against Dr. Leach because he is a Democrat. We hereby take occasion, once and for all, to denounce the insinuation as wholly uncalculated for, out of place, and lacking any foundation whatever in fact. If any of the Doctor's friends desire to excuse his present position in reference to county hospital matters on the ground of Democratic economy they have our fullest permission to do so. The manner in which the management of the county hospital has been and is being conducted is contrary to our ideas of public policy, contrary to law and an imposition upon the taxpayers—no matter whether they be Democrats, Republicans, Nationalists, Socialists, Prohibitionists or non-voting but resident aliens. Our fight is for economy in public expenditures, and politics have no more to do with it than the present innumerable absence of McGinty.

It pays to advertise, no matter whether business be brisk or dull. There is a gentleman now living in Fresno who is \$20,000 better off to-day than he would have been had he not continued to invest \$2 per month in a small advertisement in the columns of THE

FALSE RECORDS.

The action of the Democratic minority in the House of Representatives last week ought to suffice to make the spirit of the immortal George Washington wish that, while yet in the flesh, he had never owned a little hatchet and had never pined in the role of a man who was first in war, first in peace, and first in the hearts of his countrymen—after having played the part of a boy who could never tell a lie. To what utter degradation some of his countrymen of a century later have fallen is best explained by the San Francisco Bulletin, in seeking of the scenes enacted in the House last week. The Bulletin says: "It is not frequently that the body of the house appears at the head of the stairs and adjures Betsy Jane in the hall to say to the visitor that she is 'not at home.' It is not heretofore been considered that a great constitutional principle was involved in a proceeding of that kind. But the Democrats in Congress are insisting with more or less vehemence that such is the fact. They are tragically striving for the indelible right of a representative of the people to be present and absent in the House at one and the same time. The contention is that he can occupy two places simultaneously—one place in the House and a second place somewhere else."

THE SAMOAN QUESTION.

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